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# Joint Doctrine and Post-Cold War Military Intervention

By STEVEN R. DRAGO

Whereas for generations the primary threat facing the United States was confrontation with the Soviet Union, today there are two major concerns. First, in contrast to a monolithic adversary, current threats are multifaceted and require proficiency across a range of military operations other than war (MOOTW). Second, as overseas presence decreases, various operations will require that the Armed Forces deploy with the militaries of other nations. However, it is not clear that available joint doctrine provides sufficient guidance for multinational MOOTW.

Although operations in Haiti have met with success, serious setbacks have occurred during U.S.-led collective interventions in Iraq, Somalia, and Bosnia. These have raised questions about the adequacy of joint doctrine for meeting the challenge of multinational operations. Despite much analysis, there is no consensus on whether past setbacks were caused by shortcomings in doctrine on MOOTW or the failure to adhere to established doctrine for multinational operations. This article seeks to address this issue by reviewing recent military operations within the context of the principles outlined in Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*. This is critical because it is certain that we will continue to conduct such operations. The deployment of 20,000 Americans to Bosnia as part of the Implementation Force was a case in point.

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Some critics claim that doctrine is too complex to be easily understood and applied. Others argue that there is no joint doctrine for fighting as part of a coalition. If these criticisms are correct, perhaps problems encountered during recent joint and multinational operations were caused in part by ill-defined or inadequate doctrine. But our current doctrine, it can be shown, was sufficient to have prevented the tragedies that have marred some recent U.S. military operations.

Doctrine provides valuable guidance for a wide range of joint and multinational MOOTW

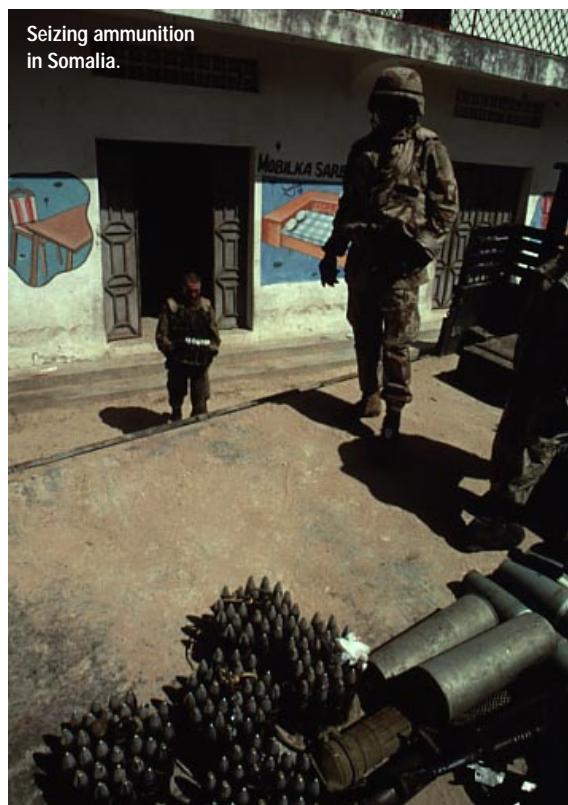
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as reflected in the six principles that underpin our doctrine for conducting such operations. These are objective, unity of effort, security, restraint, perseverance, and legitimacy and are detailed in Joint Pub 3-0, the doctrinal "bible" for joint and multinational operations.<sup>1</sup>

The former Chairman, General Colin Powell, described the first edition of Joint Pub 3-0 as an articulation of "the fundamental principles and concepts for joint and multinational operations, and it provides the basis for training our future leaders in joint warfare." As Powell explained, the list of principles offered "a common perspective from which to plan and operate and fundamentally shapes the way we prepare for conflicts and other operations." In the second edition, the current Chairman, General John Shalikashvili, noted that "this comprehensive document addresses almost every aspect of joint warfighting. . . . I challenge each commander to not only understand the principles of Joint Pub 3-0, but also to teach them to their subordinates."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, not all U.S.-led operations have followed their advice. This has resulted in setbacks that have impaired what have otherwise been successful combined operations.

#### Objective

The first principle of multinational MOOTW is to establish an explicit objective to provide adequate direction. Joint Pub 3-0 declares that "a clearly defined and attainable objective is critical when the United States is involved in [MOOTW]."<sup>3</sup> This is evident when one realizes how clearly-articulated humanitarian objectives provided direction for U.S.-led operations in Bosnia, Somalia, and northern Iraq. For example, in Bosnia where the primary objective was to provide humanitarian assistance, U.S. airdrops and U.N. convoys together delivered 272,000 tons of



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food and relief supplies in the winter of 1993. Likewise, Restore Hope broke the cycle of starvation in Somalia while Provide Comfort enabled 3.5 million Kurds to return home. Such accomplishments reflected clearly defined objectives associated with humanitarian operations. However, when each of the missions changed into nation-building, peacekeeping, or peace-enforcement operations, the specific military objectives became far more obscure and elusive.

The use of force to achieve political stability for Kurds, Somalis, and Bosnians has proven difficult at best. The main obstacle is that nobody has been able to articulate defined and attainable military solutions to thorny domestic political issues. For instance, U.N. efforts to disarm Somalis and engage in deliberations on state-building with local factions failed to assuage clan warfare that continues to plague the region. Another case in point is Provide Comfort in northern Iraq where there is no immediate solution for safeguarding Kurds short of continuing U.S. and allied military protection. In short, it is not obvious how any external military can build a viable state where there is no consensus among local powerbrokers. On the other hand, at the moment it seems that Bosnia might be a success story for collective efforts at nation-building and peace-enforcement.



U.S. Air Force (Paul R. Caron)

UH-60s landing at  
Zakho, Iraq.

Whatever the outcome, it is evident that long-term political goals can be extremely difficult to translate into well defined and readily attainable military objectives. As these operations show, the challenge is to select appropriate military actions to meet political ends.

#### Unity of Effort

The second principle of MOOTW is unity of effort. Key to ensuring it are the concepts of close coordination among force components and working toward the same operational goals. Joint Pub 3-0 stresses that commanders should "seek an atmosphere of cooperation to achieve objectives by unity of effort."<sup>4</sup> Such harmony is essential to ensuring that allied forces work in a collective and not conflicting manner. This is evident in considering how a disunity of effort has threatened to damage the multinational attempts to assist the Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq.

Provide Comfort began as a tremendous joint and multinational success but later produced a colossal failure. Initiated in April 1991, the combined operation coordinated the efforts of forces from seven nations to protect and repatriate thousands of Kurdish refugees who had fled from Iraq and sought refuge in southern Turkey. Three years later, as U.S. forces sought to protect them from Iraq, Turkey launched a military campaign against Kurdish terrorism that reportedly resulted in the deaths of up to 15,000 Kurdish men, women, and children. The result of that independent military action is a disunity of effort that threatens the successful conclusion of the multinational operation which is now reportedly termed "Provide Discomfort" by some U.S. troops.<sup>5</sup>

The disunity of Provide Comfort is also evident in the lack of coordination between U.S. Army and Air Force assets, which caused one of the most tragic operational breakdowns in recent years. In April 1994 two Air Force F-15s destroyed two Army UH-60 helicopters over northern Iraq, killing 26 U.S. and allied military and civilian personnel. Both joint training and command, control, and communications procedures were found wanting. The Army pilots reportedly failed to transmit proper electronic signals that would have identified them to Air Force airborne warning and control system (AWACS) controllers as friendly. The AWACS crew that was controlling the fighters over Iraq failed to appropriately monitor the position of the helicopters, while helicopter recognition training was apparently minimal for the F-15 pilots.

Another factor may have been the presence of Turkish fighters. Evidence suggests that the helicopters were forced to delay their sorties to accommodate Turkish activity in the area on the day of the shoot-down. It was reported that "had the helicopters left earlier, they would have missed the U.S. fighters altogether."<sup>6</sup> While Joint Pub 3-0 calls for a united effort, this tragedy highlights what can happen if coordination and unity of effort in a joint or combined operation are lacking.

#### Security

The third principle for conducting MOOTW is security. Joint Pub 3-0 emphasizes the need to "never permit hostile factions to acquire an unexpected advantage." The key is to ensure "force protection against any person, element, or group hostile to our interests."<sup>7</sup> Although the rationale for this principle is conspicuous the procedures to ensure protection of U.S. forces in Bosnia and Somalia were flawed. In any event, they certainly fell short of efforts envisioned in Joint Pub 3-0. The result was 18 dead and 75 wounded American soldiers during a failed raid on October 3, 1993 in Mogadishu and an Air Force F-16 downed by a Serb SA-6 missile on June 2, 1995 in Bosnia. These painful mission outcomes were due to operational breakdowns in security.

During testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the commander of U.S. commando forces in Somalia revealed that he had requested AC-130 gunships to provide air cover for the Rangers sent to capture warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the commander of U.S. forces requested tanks and armored personnel carriers for the operation. However, because of political sensitivity over the American force level

in Somalia, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin denied the requests even though they would have afforded greater protection for our troops.<sup>9</sup> This degraded the ability of the Rangers to protect themselves and violated the principle of security.

It is also possible that a security lapse figured in the shoot-down of an F-16 over Serb-held territory in Bosnia. On June 2, 1995, U.S. intelligence forces that supported Deny Flight obtained evidence of an SA-6 antiaircraft missile

battery being operated by Serb forces near Banja Luka.<sup>10</sup> The principle of security would demand that pilots be made aware of every

serious threat as soon as it becomes known. But that did not happen. U.S. forces failed to take actions that could have prevented the shoot-down. Had better communications existed for relaying intelligence in a timely manner, American pilots would likely have avoided the threat area. The principle of security was well established—just not adequately followed.

### Restraint

The fourth major principle of multinational MOOTW is restraint in applying military force. As Joint Pub 3-0 warns, “use of excessive force could adversely affect efforts to gain or maintain legitimacy and impede the attainment of both short- and long-term goals.”<sup>11</sup> Somalia showed what can happen when that principle is violated. The attempt to disarm heavily-armed clans was bound to have adverse effects on both short-term military operations and long-term political objectives.

During the initial stages of the U.S.-led U.N. intervention it was clear to most of the world that American and allied forces were there to provide humanitarian relief and peacekeeping. Little opposition was encountered since the mission benefitted all Somalis. However, that mission later turned to disarmament of the warlords and their clans. When local factions refused to cooperate with what they regarded as increasingly violent efforts to disarm them, they attacked U.N. forces. In other words, the less we observed the principle of restraint, the more opposition we encountered from armed clansmen. As Joint Pub 3-0 anticipated, the lack of restraint in these disarmament and “state-building” operations decreased the legitimacy of U.S. forces both in theater and at home.

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### Perseverance

The fifth principle for successful MOOTW is perseverance. Joint Pub 3-0 stipulates that “peace-time operations may require years to achieve the desired effects. . . . The patient, resolute, and persistent pursuit of national goals and objectives, for as long as necessary to achieve them, is often the requirement for success.”<sup>12</sup> Conversely, lack of perseverance may result in the failure to find solutions to political problems such as instituting a viable Somali state or Kurdish autonomy. History shows that it is possible to stop starvation in the short run. However, to solve long-term problems that cause it requires a commitment that was absent in Somalia. U.S. failure to persevere contributed to the inability to achieve the long-term objective: solving the underlying infrastructure problems that had produced mass starvation.

Many have argued that Americans should not get involved without a definite exit strategy. But we cannot always determine how long forces will be needed. For example, fifty years after World War II there are still over 100,000 troops in Europe. Likewise, more than forty-five years after North Korea attacked the South some 37,000 U.S. troops remain stationed on the peninsula. Sometimes we must be willing to endure for the long run. When we are not, we are less likely to achieve our political objectives. When the President originally pledged to remove all U.S. troops from Bosnia within a year, it was hard to see how they could achieve the principle of perseverance. In a sense, one principle of MOOTW was violated before the first U.S. soldier arrived in Bosnia.

### Legitimacy

The sixth major principle is legitimacy. This demands sustaining the willing acceptance of local groups “to make and carry out decisions.”<sup>13</sup> Legitimacy in Somalia meant a willingness on the part of the various factions to accept U.N. policies, something that was lost once our troops used force to impose a solution. Restore Hope sought to end a famine that threatened hundreds of thousands of Somalis. It was successful until the United Nations initiated a violence-marred effort to convert an anarchic patchwork of ancient tribal rivalries into a viable state. For example, U.S. forces delivered over 92,000 tons of supplies to end the starvation and began the infrastructure-rebuilding needed for long-term solutions to problems that had resulted in more than 350,000 deaths. However this achievement was overshadowed by American losses: 44 killed and 175 wounded.<sup>14</sup> That revealed how a loss of legitimacy can change a successful mission into a failed intervention.



U.S. Air Force (Richard M. Helmick)

Evacuees from Liberia arriving in Sierra Leone.

When a military organization uses force to determine control of territory, the operation will likely be viewed as illegitimate by local factions who stand to lose power or prestige. It is not clear whether U.S. forces considered the principle of legitimacy in targeting Aideed's forces. However, it is clear within the context of Joint Pub 3-0 that disarming hostile groups violated that principle. In other words, the decision went against basic doctrine on MOOTW.

The point is not to fault decisionmakers and planners who are responsible for complex and difficult missions. Rather, it is to determine whether current doctrine provides sufficient guidance to prevent the sort of operational tragedies experienced in the past. Setbacks during recent multinational military operations other than war occurred when operational decisions violated one or more of the six key doctrinal principles in Joint Pub 3-0.

If joint doctrine is adequate for multinational MOOTW, we must ask why some recent military decisions have violated basic doctrinal principles. One strong possibility is a disjuncture in the doctrine-decisionmaking nexus. Doctrine may not be playing the role that the Chairman envisioned. We must improve how joint commanders and planners apply doctrine to complex problems. As General Shalikashvili has said, commanders must use "these battle-tested tenets. Otherwise, we will not have real doctrine."<sup>15</sup>

The sort of tragedies that tainted recent operations can only be prevented by incorporating joint doctrine into the decisionmaking process for

all those responsible for national security policy. Future involvement in military operations other than war must adhere to the six principles found in Joint Pub 3-0. Applying this doctrine we may avoid repeating the tragic lessons of the past. **JFQ**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations* (1993), pp. V-4, ii.

<sup>2</sup> Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations* (1995), see introduction.

<sup>3</sup> Joint Pub 3-0 (1995), p. V-2.

<sup>4</sup> Joint Pub 3-0 (1995), p. V-2. Much discussion of the six principles in this edition is taken verbatim from the first. Doctrine that could have precluded major shortcomings therefore existed before an operational tragedy occurred.

<sup>5</sup> Vago Muradian, "Is U.S. Intelligence Being Misused?" *Air Force Times*, December 12, 1994, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Joint Pub 3-0 (1995), p. V-2.

<sup>8</sup> Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Officers Were Split on Botched Somali Raid: A Request for More Airpower Was Refused," *The New York Times*, May 13, 1994, p. A-6.

<sup>9</sup> Rick Maze, "Lawmakers Accuse Aspin of Betraying U.S. Troops," *Air Force Times*, November 8, 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Scott O'Grady, *Return with Honor* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), p. 196.

<sup>11</sup> Joint Pub 3-0 (1995), p. V-3.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. V-4.

<sup>14</sup> "Goodbye Somalia: Did the Mission Succeed?" *Air Force Times*, April 4, 1994.

<sup>15</sup> Joint Pub 3-0 (1995), p. V-3.